

**Report of the  
Accreditation Visiting Team**

**Payson High School  
1050 South Main  
Payson, Utah 84651**

**March 8-9, 2005**



Utah State Office of Education  
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**THE REPORT OF THE  
VISITING TEAM REVIEWING**

**Payson High School  
1050 South Main  
Payson, Utah 84651**

**March 8-9, 2005**

**UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION**

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## **FOREWORD**

The major purpose of the accreditation process is to stimulate school growth and improvement so as to increase student achievement.

In these efforts, the school staff makes a comprehensive evaluation of the school's programs, operations, and results. The school determines how actual practices align to stated objectives and resulting outcomes. It is a three-phased evaluation: (1) self-evaluation, (2) on-site evaluation by an external team of educators, and (3) implementation using units of the evaluation to improve the school by effecting thoughtful change.

The evaluation, March 8-9, 2005, was conducted because of the school's desire to ensure quality education for all students in the school, and to increase student achievement.

The entire staff of Payson High School is commended for the time and effort devoted to studying and evaluating the various facets of the total program and to preparing the materials used by the visiting team. The excellent leadership given by Principal John Penrod is also commended.

The staff and administration are congratulated for their desire for excellence at Payson High School, and also for the professional attitude of all members of the group, which made it possible for them to see areas of weakness and strength and to suggest procedures for bringing about improvements.

While these recommendations may be used to solicit financial support to acquire some of the materials, equipment, and services needed to carry out a more effective program, it is even more important that the faculty and administration utilize them as they continue to evaluate and modify course offerings and administrative and classroom procedures to more dramatically increase student achievement at Payson High School.

Patti Harrington, Ed.D.  
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**PAYSON HIGH SCHOOL**  
**ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF**

**School Administration**

John Penrod..... Principal  
Ben Ford..... Assistant Principal  
Bart Peery..... Assistant Principal

**Counseling**

Joy Benson..... Counselor  
Danny Lundell ..... Counselor  
Craig Wright ..... Counselor

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Barbara Arrington ..... CTE Secretary  
Peggy Ash ..... Tech  
Susan Ballard..... Custodian  
Jodi Beck ..... Volleyball  
Cindy Bradford..... Nursing  
Tonya Brinkerhoff..... Lunch  
Jill Carlson..... Tech  
Stacie Carlson..... Tech  
Jeri Carter ..... Tech  
Ryan Carter ..... Tech  
Erma Clark ..... Custodian  
Debbie Jacobson..... Computer Tech  
Margene Jensen ..... Tech  
Jill Johnson..... Speech Therapist  
Connie Mattinson ..... Secretary  
Melony Mortensen ..... Finance  
Beth Nelson ..... Counseling Secretary  
Anna Pearson..... Office Tech  
Landon Sharp ..... Sweeper  
J.D. Shepherd ..... Youth at Risk  
Julie Silcox ..... Lunch  
Diana Steele..... Attendance  
Jennifer Stoker..... Nurse  
Dennis Taylor..... Campus Supervisor

Hank Taylor.....	Custodian
Karl Teemant.....	Community Recreation
Steven Tutty .....	Psychologist
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 Reed Thomson  
 Sheila Thurston  
 Tina Wadley  
 Elwood Wall  
 Linda Walter  
 Kerri Welton  
 Brett White



## **PAYSON HIGH SCHOOL**

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

*We Care*

*We Excel*

The mission of Payson High School is to maximize each student's potential as a responsible, productive and involved citizen.

### **BELIEF STATEMENTS**

1. Each person is unique and has individual worth.
2. All students can learn and prepare to be lifelong learners.
3. Each person has rights with accompanying responsibilities and accountability.
4. Optimal learning takes place when there is a perceived need, benefit, or relevance to life.
5. Optimal learning takes place when there is a perceived need, benefit, or relevance of life.
6. Finding meaning in work performed contributes to the quality of life.
7. The family is the foundation of our society with education as a shared responsibility of the individual, home, school, and community.
8. Communication skills are essential for success.

## **MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM**

Dan N. Johnson, Mount Logan Middle School, Logan City School District,  
Visiting Team Chairperson

Mari Braithwaite, Lehi High School, Alpine School District

William Gillespie, Orem High School, Alpine School District

Jane Lindhout, Orem High School, Alpine School District

Georgia M. Loutensock, Utah State Office of Education

## VISITING TEAM REPORT

### PAYSON HIGH SCHOOL

#### CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE

Payson High School is the home of the Mighty Lions and prides itself on the comprehensive nature of the programs and services it provides. Payson High is a 4A school located in an area that has traditionally been rural/agrarian. As a result of recent population changes, the number of students attending Payson High School has seen a marked increase. The population shift in the area has changed the community from a rural setting to one that is now increasingly suburban. These demographic changes are continuing to have an impact on the communities' expectations of the school.

Even with an influx of new families, Payson High School continues to be the center of community life. Students, parents, and teachers all noted that their school was very important to them, and that they fully supported efforts being made to make Payson High School a vibrant learning community for everyone.

*a) What significant findings were revealed by the school's analysis of its profile?*

Payson High School has offered exceptional programs for many years in agriculture, mechanics, and business. Community members and school leaders have discovered that there is a need to offer more opportunities for students interested in technical fields, and that students need to be encouraged to take more courses in the areas of math, science, and technology. Daily attendance continues to be an issue, and it is believed that this affects student performance.

Achievement scores are generally higher than most national norm-referenced scores, but Payson High School is scoring lower than the scores reported at the state and district levels. The profile clearly demonstrated the need for significant planning as demographic changes occur, and as a result of the impact a new high school will have. Sending some students and staff from Payson High School to another facility will affect the school's ability to offer courses and programs at the current level.

*b) What modifications to the school profile should the school consider for the future?*

- Data should be disaggregated according to the subgroups identified in NCLB, and this information should be used to guide the work of the school.

- More sources of data should be reviewed in order to determine who is learning and who is not learning.
- The results of the school's data regarding Adequate Yearly Progress should be provided in the profile.

### **Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:**

- Review norm-referenced test data and develop specific plans based on these findings.
- Review cohort data from groups as they move through the school.
- Provide correlation data (i.e., grades and attendance, behavior, performance assessment, etc.) by grade, gender, ethnicity, and so on.
- The site leadership team and stakeholders did an excellent job of following the accreditation process by including the components of the Collaborating for Student Achievement Program. They spent a great deal of time on planning and preparation of the document. At this point, they have completed their initial study and documentation has been provided. The development of action plans that contain more specificity in relation to strategies for improving student achievement is an area for further inquiry.

## **CHAPTER 2: THE SELF-STUDY PROCESS**

- a) *To what extent has the school community engaged in a collaborative self-study process on behalf of students?*

The school has made a good start, but the data is incomplete in some areas. The Visiting Team sensed limited collaboration in the final part of the self-study. Multiple parties were engaged in the process, but some did not participate, for whatever reason, and apparently more efforts are needed to get full “buy-in.” Those who were highly involved in the work indicated strong support for the accreditation efforts at the school.

- b) *To what extent does the school's self-study accurately reflect the school's current strengths and limitations?*

Many of the strengths and limitations identified by the various study and focus groups were evident to the Visiting Team. As previously stated, some data still needs to be reviewed in light of how it reveals who is learning and who is not

learning at Payson High School. One positive example among many is the Healthy Lifestyles Department. They collaborated to produce a thorough view of their current status and to drive efforts to receive grant money. This effort has helped to expand their offerings and effectiveness in teaching the State Core.

### **CHAPTER 3: INSTRUCTIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS**

Payson High School's desired results for student learning (DRSLs) are as follows:

1. Lifelong Learning
2. Responsibility
3. Communication Skills
4. Thinking and Reasoning

#### **Shared Vision, Beliefs, Mission, and Goals:**

- a) *To what extent did the school facilitate a collaborative process to build a shared vision for the school (mission) that defines a compelling purpose and direction for the school?*

Evidence is present to indicate that Payson High School utilized a consensus-building process that involved teachers and administrators in defining the school's mission. The process invited the participation of all, including parents and students. Drafts of the documents were disseminated, and recommendations for non-substantive changes were received, reviewed, and made.

The school's mission statement and belief statements are visible throughout the school. Students and faculty members were aware of these and were able to discuss their importance to the school improvement effort.

- b) *To what extent has the school defined a set of beliefs that reflect the commitment of the administration and staff to support student achievement and success?*

The process used to develop the belief statements was identical to the process for developing the school mission. The Visiting Team commends the stakeholders' work to align the belief statements with community values, demographics, and school traditions. There was strong congruence between these statements and the work that the school is apparently beginning to do for long-term improvement.

The Visiting Team observed that instructional practices were consistent with the written belief statements. Students' comments indicate an agreement that the

institutional practice is consistent with the belief statements. The school is to be commended for practicing its stated beliefs and values.

- c) *To what extent do the school's mission and beliefs align to support the school's desired results for student learning (DRSLs)?*

Though apparently developed simultaneously, the school's mission and beliefs align with the DRSLs. It is clear that all stakeholders have been exposed to the DRSLs, and they are posted in all classrooms. The Visiting Team commends the school for communicating the importance of the DRSLs to the students, this communication being evidenced by one student's explanation of the four phrases on the bulletin board: "They are what we are supposed to have before we walk out of here for the last time."

The action plans are not all directly tied to the DRSLs and are very general in nature. The Visiting Team suggests that the school develop specific action plans with SMART goals and a direct and stated correlation to the DRSLs. Data needs to be collected to evaluate the relationship between the action plans and student learning.

#### **Curriculum Development:**

- a) *To what extent does the staff work collaboratively to ensure the curriculum is based on clearly defined standards and the Utah Core Curriculum (with inclusion of the Utah Life Skills)?*

The Visiting Team observed limited collaboration within some departments to coordinate curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Most felt that collaboration was one of the most important things they could achieve. The faculty members at Payson High School are looking forward to working closely with one another in the future.

The staff feels confident that the majority of instructors cover the State Core and district requirements. In courses that have an end-of-level or certification requirement, the teachers have been very successful in getting the students to a level of competence. Pre-tests are required by the district professional development guidelines, and those instruments have been used to guide instruction at the individual classroom level.

The district has provided training on the Six Traits of Writing. All newly hired teachers have taken the opportunity to go through the training, and some of the more seasoned teachers have as well. There exists a strong feeling in the school that they should be working toward better writing across all the content areas. Teachers in many departments would like to have more instruction on proper writing so that the students can hear a unified voice in the instruction of writing.

The Payson High staff hopes the district will implement a late start day next year in order to give the staff members some time for more collaboration within and between departments, so that they can continue their work on curriculum development. They also hope to use that time to open conversations with the feeder Junior High, which is just across the field, dealing with vertical alignment.

Payson has excellent teachers who are individually working to develop better curricula within their own classrooms. The Visiting Team recommends the development of a systematic approach to developing department-wide and eventually school-wide curriculum guidelines and rubrics to help define expectations that will align with the desired results for student learning. If the process can be shared by many of the stakeholders at the school, they will be able to capture and share best practices, unify a vocabulary of teaching and learning, and develop methods of data collection that will guide them in further curriculum development.

- b) *To what extent does the teaching staff work collaboratively to support the development of a curriculum that focuses on the school's desired results for student learning?*

The school is beginning to see the need for inter- and intra-departmental collaboration focused on the DRSLs. In-service was provided at the beginning of the current school year to acquaint and train faculty on the DRSLs.

The DRSLs have been recently developed by the school and are currently hanging in every classroom. The students, for the most part, understand what they are. Individually teachers are beginning the process of tying their units and lessons into the DRSLs. Action Plan #1 recognizes the need for more faculty time to work toward a collaborative approach to curriculum development. If Payson High is given an hour a week next year in a late start format, departments will be able to implement their plan for working within and across departments to better align their curricula with the DRSLs. Their immediate goal is to develop a school-wide writing rubric.

The Healthy Lifestyles Department has been leading collaboration and is working to develop curricula across their department to address the DRSLs. For the most part, there is a feeling of friendship and trust within the departments that will be helpful in building curriculum and in encouraging best practices.

The Visiting Team commends Payson High School on its many strengths and its plan for future collaboration. (The Visiting Team recommends the collection of data that will serve to validate the successes that have been achieved.)

The size and spread of the school are somewhat detrimental to collaboration; it is suggested that departments be housed closer together so they can share resources and teaching strategies, and work together in less formal structures.

### **Quality Instructional Design:**

- a) *To what extent does the professional staff design and implement a variety of learning experiences that actively engage students?*

It was evident to the Visiting Team that the professional staff members are designing and utilizing a multitude of instructional strategies. The strategies throughout departments that actively engaged students included peer tutoring, lab exploration and experiential instruction, use of hands-on activities and manipulatives, music, extensive use of technology in CTE classes, role-plays, and cooperative learning activities. While many teachers are effectively using these instructional strategies, the Visiting Team would recommend that all teachers continue to explore “best practices” that will actively engage students in learning.

- b) *To what extent does the professional staff employ a variety of instructional strategies to ensure the needs of different learners are met?*

The Visiting Team regularly observed teachers changing instructional strategies throughout the block period to keep students engaged and to connect with the varying learning styles within the class. Some teachers have created multiple assignments that students can choose from that address various learning styles, a practice commonly referred to as layering curricula. In addition, the Visiting Team also saw evidence of some self-paced learning modules (packets) within the Business Department that will help students who are prepared to move forward or assist students who may require extra time.

Teachers feel that communication with the Special Education Department has improved significantly over the last few years and, as general education teachers, they believe that the special education students are receiving the appropriate accommodations and modifications. The same comment was made of students with formalized 504 plans and accommodations.

The ESL population is served by one teacher, who is implementing excellent instructional strategies for this population. The Visiting Team noted that there is a general concern among the faculty about reaching out to their growing ESL population. Therefore, it is the recommendation from the Visiting Team that the school look for opportunities to provide additional support and assistance for the ESL teacher with tracking this population, and provide much-needed additional support in the mainstream classrooms.



- c) *To what extent do the professional staff and leadership provide additional opportunities which support student learning?*

The professional staff provides an after-school math lab and writing lab. Teachers report that they make themselves available to all students before and after school. Additional support is provided to students through the PLATO lab, and the Counseling Department at Payson High School has made excellent efforts to help students participate in internship and apprenticeship programs in the community.

The professional staff and Payson High School has a strong desire to move forward with structured collaboration time. The Visiting Team fully supports the action plan to increase collaboration, and recommends that the teachers use this time to make data-driven changes in instructional practice. The Visiting Team further recommends that the staff draw from their collective knowledge and skills of instructional practices to increase vertical and horizontal alignment within and between departments.

#### **Quality Assessment Systems:**

- a) *To what extent has the staff developed classroom or school-wide assessments based on clearly articulated expectations for student achievement?*

Most classroom assessments are content-driven. Some faculty members have assessments that clearly articulate expectations for student achievement. The CTE Department, in particular, has competency-based assessments that clearly and accurately measure student learning.

At the time of the visit there were no school-wide assessments. Standardized norm-referenced tests and state Criterion-Referenced Tests (CRTs) are the only assessments used in multiple classes or grades. The focus group defined one of the weaknesses of assessment by saying, “Most teachers have their own individual grading scale; there is no school-wide grading scale.” One of the focus group’s recommendations was to develop a school-wide grading system.

- b) *To what extent are assessments of student learning developed using methods that reflect the intended purpose and performance standards?*

Many faculty members use results of standardized and end-of-level tests to create yearly curricula in the core areas of math, science, and language arts. However, results from this testing are slow to reach the individual teacher, so planning is delayed. Both standardized and individual teacher assessment results are used to evaluate curriculum changes and design.

The Assessment Focus Group reported:

As a whole, the faculty uses a wide range of assessments. Among these are written tests, projects, portfolios, papers and reports, group projects and tests, labs, PowerPoint presentations, and individual student interviews. The assessments align with teaching.

- c) *To what extent are assessments designed, developed, and used in a fair and equitable manner?*

Assessments seem to be fair and equitable. Most teachers are aware of students with varying needs and seek to accommodate these differences. One of the recommendations of the focus group was to “encourage teachers to use a wider variety of assessment methods, other than written tests, to give students more opportunities to demonstrate subject competency.”

### **Leadership for School Improvement:**

- a) *To what extent does the school leadership promote quality instruction by fostering an academic learning climate and actively supporting teaching and learning?*

Many positive changes are occurring at Payson High School, and this is a direct result of the outstanding leadership shown by the school’s three administrators and teacher leaders. A rather intense two-year study has been completed, and many findings have surfaced that the leaders realize they must address. During the study, time has been set aside for collegial work to assess school needs. The leaders want to continue this so that academic concerns can be properly addressed. The school environment is clean and nicely decorated. A sense of school pride exists, and all those interviewed indicated they felt this has a positive impact on teaching and learning. The administrators indicated a strong desire to listen to teachers and to develop plans that address their concerns. Students stated that they feel safe at Payson High School, and that the leaders of the school are concerned about their personal and educational needs.

(The Visiting Team especially noted how well organized the school is. There is intentionality in the design of the day. Access and equity are considered. Interruption of teaching time was minimal.)

- b) *To what extent does the school leadership employ effective decision making that is data-driven, research-based, and collaborative?*

The leaders all expressed concern over areas that surfaced where learning is not as strong as it could be. A good example of this is the identified needs of the ESL population. Not only did the leaders recognize the problem, but they had already developed solid plans to address these students’ attendance and learning needs.

The Visiting Team noted that teams of teachers and administrators meet often, and that they are increasingly using data to drive the decision-making process. The Visiting Team was impressed with the efforts leaders have made so far, and with their recognition of the next best steps for continued school improvement. (Collaboration time and use of data are significant needs that leaders stated they wanted for their school.)

- c) *To what extent does the school leadership monitor progress in student achievement and instructional effectiveness through a comprehensive assessment system and continuous reflection?*

Administrators and school leaders did a nice job of getting important pieces of data organized and into plans for future school improvement. They are now at the point where they are planning to act on this data in significant ways. This desire for use of data and a concern for doing what's best for the school were impressive to the Visiting Team. Although an extensive assessment system is not yet in place for monitoring the day-to-day work around the DRSLs, standard forms of school-wide assessment do exist (i.e., CRTs, ITBS, CTE, etc.). Collaboration time and staff development programs should ensure that teachers are given the time and tools they need for reflection on their practice and the performance of their students.

- d) *To what extent does the school leadership provide skillful stewardship by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources of the school for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment?*

This is a strong point of the leadership of the school. It was discovered that organizing the school and creating a clean safe environment were some of the first steps that the administrators had taken. Significant efforts have gone into getting what the school needs and changing the culture of Payson High School. The leaders are commended for getting this first very important first step completed. It has truly set the stage for other significant changes to occur.

- e) *To what extent does the school leadership make decisions related to the allocation and use of resources which align with the school goals, the achievement of the DRSLs, and school improvement efforts?*

The administrators and teacher leaders have positioned themselves to do exactly this. The main components of Collaborating for Student Achievement have been addressed, and now the work is moving forward to allocate resources for purposeful school improvement.

- f) *To what extent does the school leadership empower the school community and encourage commitment, participation, collaboration, and shared responsibility for student learning?*

The Community Council and the focus groups indicated that their ideas were considered, and many mentioned that specific suggestions they made ended up being a part of the school's action plans. Frequent meetings were held with stakeholders to get input and to help direct the self-study at Payson High School. (Several parents indicated that lines of communication with the school administration were better than they ever remember them being before.) The administrators stated their belief that students, teachers, and parents, could be trusted to use time and resources for school improvement. This trust will be significant as important tasks and decisions are delegated to other empowered school leaders.

### **Community Building:**

- a) *To what extent does the school foster community building and working relationships within the school?*

The Visiting Team saw evidence of an extremely collegial staff, a staff that wants to work with students. The Visiting Team noted that the school continually attempts to work with parents, and that there is parent input in decision making through the PTA organization, as well as the School Community Council.

- b) *To what extent does the school extend the school community through collaborative networks that support student learning?*

There appears to be strong community support for Payson High. The community is kept aware of school activities through a local weekly newspaper, as well as the school publications. Businesses within the community support many school projects and activities, including an intern program that places students in various occupations.

The Visiting Team noted evidence of support for student learning in the community through a large internship and apprenticeship program. Regular newsletters, the school website, and parent-teacher conferences are additional ways in which the school communicates with patrons. Teachers communicate with parents via e-mail and phone. Regular SEOP meetings are held, and parents are invited to attend. In addition, the school works with the local newspaper, which regularly features information about Payson High School.

### **Culture of Continuous Improvement and Learning:**

- a) *To what extent does the school build skills and the capacity for improvement through comprehensive and ongoing professional development programs focused on the school's goals for improvement?*

Many teachers take advantage of the professional development opportunities offered by the district, state, UVSC, or national organizations. They recognize the importance of continual learning in order to stay current with their course material, and because it serves to refresh and energize them. Past faculty meetings have been used to provide information about safety issues and policies. Teachers recognize the fact that they have experts in their midst, and hope to share knowledge with each other at the school level if they can find the time to do so. The accreditation process has encouraged the creation of focus groups and teams that can continue to work collaboratively.

As work continues on the action plans, increased collaboration will occur, and the concept of professional development will be encouraged. Some action research projects would help the staff develop more data and look more closely at its practice.

*b) To what extent does the school create conditions that support productive change and continuous improvement?*

The school has recommended that faculty members who attend conferences return and report, either to the faculty as a whole or to their department. The school and district are willing to pay for substitutes when teachers desire to attend conferences and workshops.

The late start day recommended by the staff to start next year will provide the school a specified period of time to focus on the DRSLs and to encourage the sharing of ideas within and between departments. The continuation of the teams created to carry out the action plans of the school will provide another mix of faculty and staff to address the ideas of continuous improvement.

Their interest in working toward better writing instruction will give the staff members an opportunity to hear from the on-campus experts and will foster the idea that professional development can be done within the school.

Some departments and teachers are discouraged due to the lack of in-service opportunities that are meaningful to their field, held during the school year, and cheap enough to attend. Younger teachers often aren't aware of professional development opportunities. The Visiting Team recommends that the school encourage more in-service participation by encouraging membership in professional organizations and by utilizing resources to enable teachers to attend meetings.

## **CHAPTER 4: NORTHWEST ASSOCIATION OF ACCREDITED SCHOOLS (NAAS) STANDARDS I-XI**

### **Standard I – Educational Program**

This standard is met. Payson High School's instructional and organizational practices, as well as its policies and procedures, support the desired results for student learning and prepare students to succeed in a culturally diverse, democratic society.

### **Standard II – Student Personnel Services**

This standard is met. Student personnel services are designed to give systematic assistance to students. The assigned personnel for guidance includes a minimum of one full-time person for each 400 students enrolled.

### **Standard III – School Plant and Equipment**

This standard is met. The school plant provides for a variety of instructional activities and programs, and incorporates aesthetic features that contribute to a positive educational atmosphere.

### **Standard IV – Library Media Program**

This standard is met. The school library media program is a primary resource for literacy, information, and curriculum support. A certified library media teacher provides instruction, resources, and activities to promote independent use of ideas and information.

### **Standard V – Records**

This standard is met. Student records are maintained, handled, and protected in the best interests of students and parents. Students and parents have the right to access personal student records and are ensured the privacy of such, as guaranteed by federal legislation.

### **Standard VI – School Improvement (This is addressed in the self-study.)**

This standard is met. The school improvement plan focuses on the total school rather than each of the separate components within the school.

### **Standard VII – Preparation of Personnel**

This standard is met. All professional personnel are in compliance with the licensing requirements of the state of Utah and are properly endorsed for the subjects they are assigned.

### **Standard VIII – Administration**

This standard is met. The administration of Payson High School provides educational leadership, supervises and coordinates programs, and carries out the necessary administrative procedures.

### **Standard IX – Teacher Load**

This standard is met. The total number of students instructed by any one teacher in any one grading period does not exceed numbers set by the Utah State Office of Education and/or Northwest.

### **Standard X – Activities**

This standard is met. Payson High School supports a range of activities that supplement the basic instructional program by providing additional interests and opportunities for learning to take place.

### **Standard XI – Business Practices**

This standard is met. The school is financially responsible. Proper budgetary procedures and generally accepted accounting principles are followed for all school funds. The school's advertising and promotional literature are completely truthful and ethical.

## **CHAPTER 5: SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS – ACTION PLAN**

- a) *To what extent is the school-wide action plan adequate in addressing the critical areas for follow-up?*

The school action plans are broad in scope. The Visiting Team was told that implementation teams would be developed to prioritize, set specific goals, and implement the action plans. Without these implementation teams or some other monitoring activity, the action plans as now written could very easily become neglected and never brought to fruition.

Not all faculty members understand how the action plans were developed, or what is expected of them in the implementation (e.g., why the writing rubric was chosen as the work product for the collaboration efforts).

- b) *To what extent is there sufficient commitment to the action plan, school-wide and system-wide?*

As the action plans are not specific and individuals have not been given assignments and responsibilities with an accountability component, there is not sufficient commitment to carry out the well-intentioned general plans. The Visiting Team believes the administration is committed to the process and will work with teacher and community leaders to ensure that the action plans are accomplished.

- c) *How sound does the follow-up process that the school intends to use for monitoring the accomplishments of the school-wide action plan appear to be?*

There is not an understanding of the follow-up process, even in those named as responsible parties. The intention to complete the action plans was evident to the Visiting Team, but these details should have been accomplished before the site visit occurred.

There is no evidence, from conversations with the stakeholders, that items listed on the timeline of the action plan as “due” prior to today’s date have been completed. If they have been, their completion has not been communicated to the stakeholders.

## **CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM**

### **Commendations:**

- The Visiting Team commends the administrators for empowering the emergence of school leadership. Payson High School did an excellent job of following the accreditation process. Components are in place that will facilitate school improvement in the years to come.
- The Visiting Team commends the positive culture of Payson High. There is a high degree of pride at Payson High School, as well as collegiality and a cohesive spirit in the school and community. The respect that exists between students and faculty is impressive.



- The Visiting Team commends the condition of the school's physical plant. The environment is clean, inviting, and safe. The administration, faculty /staff, and custodians should be proud of the setting that has been created at Payson High School. It is very conducive to learning.
- The Visiting Team commends the wide array of choices that are available for students in both academics and extracurricular activities. The focus on helping all students and finding ways for connection and engagement is truly commendable.
- The Visiting Team commends the teachers at Payson High School for their use of a variety of powerful teaching and learning strategies. Their experience and expertise shows in the design and implementation of their instructional plans.

### **Recommendations:**

- The Visiting Team recommends that the stakeholders of Payson High continue to collect and analyze demographic data. School administrators and teacher leaders are aware of the need to closely watch the changes that will occur as a result of population increases in their attendance area. This may turn out to be a special opportunity to adjust some programs and implement others identified in the action plans. These population changes will also have an impact on demographics, affecting the kind of programs and interventions that the school provides.
- The Visiting Team recommends that technology and software needs across the school be considered. Even though some new labs have been installed, there is a need for more software, greater numbers of students need access to technology, and a staff training program centered on the use of technology for teaching and learning should be developed.
- The Visiting Team recommends that Payson High School continue to promote a culture of continuous improvement where data-informed decision making is used to inform instruction. Once a teacher uses data to determine who is learning and who is not, differentiated instructional practices and appropriate interventions need to be used to address learning deficits. COGNOS will be beneficial to this effort.
- The school did a superb job of identifying and informing stakeholders about the desired results for student learning. The Visiting Team recommends that it now take the necessary steps to assess whether the DRSLs are being achieved on a school-wide basis.
- The Visiting Team recommends that the plan identified by the administration be implemented so that teachers have time for collaboration. The school is poised to make some significant changes; therefore, time for consultation and decision making is extremely important.

- The school is ready for a robust staff development program. The Visiting Team recommends that this program include, among other topics, standards-based instruction, creating and using multiple lines of assessment, powerful teaching and learning strategies, and technology-based applications.
- The action plans developed by the school leadership set the stage for what is to come next. It is recommended that implementation teams be developed to ensure that specific strategies are developed and implemented that will truly affect student achievement.

Note:

*The Visiting Team appreciated the opportunity to work with all the stakeholders at Payson High School. Everyone involved did a wonderful job. Even though an accreditation term of six-clear is being recommended by the Visiting Team, it was felt that the updated strategies in the action plan, and the oversight process that has been designed to manage implementation, should be reviewed at the conclusion of one year.*